

CLAIMS

1. A system for providing real-time communication over a global network between two or more users, each of said users using a device communicatively coupled to the global network, said system comprising:

5 a client messaging application which runs on the users' devices, said client application providing a user interface displayed on each user's device screen, said user interface comprising:

 a message entry window for the user to enter data;

 a communication window for displaying messages entered in a session; and

10 means for accessing one or more application agents, each of which being associated to an external application;

 wherein when any of said application agents is activated, the external application represented by said activated application agent runs on top of the client messaging application such that all users in said session can instantly use the
15 external application represented by said activated application agent without leaving said session.

2. The system of Claim 1, wherein said external application is either a local application in the user's device or a third party service on the global network.

3. The system of Claim 2, wherein said third party service on the global network is any of:

5 an instant translation service;

 a speech synthesis service;

 an automatic publishing service;

 a picture sharing service;

 a map sharing service;

10 a quote service; and

 a Web search engine.

4. The system of Claim 1, wherein said activated application agent addresses other applications on the other side of said session via the user's message protocol.

5. The system of Claim 4, wherein the data transferred via the user's message protocol for addressing other applications on the other side of said session is a sequence of characters that represents binary data.

6. The system of Claim 1, wherein said means for accessing one or more application

5 agents further comprises:

means for displaying a plurality of distinct visual cues, each of which being representative of one of said application agents; and

means for associating one or more of said visual cues to a contact in the user's contact list, said association being based on the user's prior use or/and use frequency, with said contact, of the application agents represented by said visual cues.

7. The system of Claim 6, wherein whenever said contact joins said session, the application agent represented by said associated visual cue is automatically activated.

15 8. The system of Claim 6, wherein any of said application agents can be registered as a contact in the user's list of contacts.

9. The system of Claim 8, wherein at least one of said registered application agents is associated to an interactive service.

10. The system of Claim 9, wherein any other registered application agent can be stacked on said registered application agent associated to the interactive service.

5 11. The system of Claim 1, wherein said means for accessing is a selection window.

12. The system of Claim 11, wherein said selection window displays any of:

a list of unregistered application agents, each of which being available to be stacked on said client messaging application; and

a list of registered application agents, each of which being already stacked on
10 said client messaging application and is immediately available to be activated by the user.

13. The system of Claim 12, wherein the user can register an application agent by dragging a symbol representative of said application agent from said list of unregistered application agents to said list of registered application agents.

15 14. The system of Claim 13, wherein said symbol is an icon or a title.

15. The system of Claim 12, wherein the user can unregister a registered application agent by dragging a symbol representative of said application agent from said list of registered application agents to said list of unregistered application agents.

16. The system of Claim 12, wherein the user can register an application agent by
5 applying one or more mouse-clicking commands.

17. The system of Claim 12, wherein the user can activate a registered application agent by dragging a symbol representative of said application agent from said selection window to said communication window.

18. The system of Claim 17, wherein said symbol is an icon or a title.

10 19. The system of Claim 12, wherein the user can activate a registered application agent by applying one or more mouse-clicking commands.

20. The system of Claim 12, wherein the user can activate a registered application agent from a local application represented by a registered application agent.

21. The system of Claim 13, further comprising:

means for associating an alias of said symbol to a contact in the user's contact list, said association being based on the user's prior use or/and use frequency, with said contact, of the application agent represented by said symbol.

22. The system of Claim 12, wherein said list of unregistered application agents is
5 updated without need of changing said client application.

23. The system of Claim 1, further comprising:

means for inviting another user to activate one of said application agents in the session.

24. The system of Claim 1, wherein said user interface further comprises:

10 means for initiating synchronous sharing of a third party service represented by an activated application agent.

25. A method for incorporating external resources into an instant messaging session supported by an instant messaging system, said instant messaging system comprising a client messaging application which runs on a number of devices
15 communicatively coupled to the Internet, comprising the steps of:

said client messaging application providing a user interface displayed on each device's screen from which the users communicate with each other, said user interface comprising a message entry window for the user to enter data, a communication window for displaying messages entered in a session, and a selection window for accessing one or more application agents, each of said application agents being associated to an external application, the method further comprising the steps of:

activating a registered application agent from a list of registered application agents, wherein each of said registered application agents is stacked on said client messaging application and is instantly available to be activated by the user; and

sharing the external application to which said activated application agent is associated.

26. The method of Claim 25, wherein said external application is either a local application in the user's device or a third party service on the Internet.

27. The method of Claim 26, wherein said third party service on the Internet is any of:

an instant translation service;

a speech synthesis service;

an automatic publishing service;

a picture sharing service;

a map sharing service;

5 a quote service; and

a Web search engine.

28. The method of Claim 25, wherein at least one of said registered application agents is associated to an interactive service.

29. The method of Claim 24, further comprising the steps of:

10 registering an application agent by dragging a symbol representative of said application agent from a list of unregistered application agents to said list of registered application agents, wherein each of said unregistered application agents is available to be stacked on said client application; and

unregistering a registered application agent by dragging a symbol representative of said registered application agent from said list of registered application agents to said list of unregistered application agents.

30. The method of Claim 25 further comprising the steps of:

5 registering an application agent by applying a number of mouse-clicking commands; and

unregistering a registered application agent by applying a number of mouse-clicking commands.

31. The method of Claim 24, further comprising the step of:

10 associating one or more of visual cues to a contact in the user's contact list, each visual cue representing one of said registered application agents, said association being based on the user's prior use or/and use frequency, with said contact, of the application agents represented by said visual cues.

32. The method of Claim 31, further comprising the step of:

15 automatically activating the application agents represented by said associated visual cues whenever said contact joins said instant messaging session.

33. The method of Claim 31, wherein said contact can be any of:

a screen name representing a human contact;

a name or a visual cue representing an interactive service; and

a name or visual cue representing one of said registered application agents.